Accessible Services Policy

How we can make a reasonable adjustment to make your life easier if you're struggling to access our services due to a disability

Policy Statement

Yorkshire Housing is committed to delivering services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our customers. We recognise that some customers may face barriers when accessing our services and we will take reasonable and proportionate steps to remove or reduce those barriers wherever possible.

This policy sets out how we make our services accessible, how customers can request reasonable adjustments, and how we will work with customers to agree appropriate solutions that support fair access to our services.

Our wider approach to identifying, recording and responding to customer vulnerabilities, support needs and additional needs is set out in the Additional Needs Policy. Nor does not cover physical adaptations to customers' homes, such as ramps, level-access showers or other specialist equipment. These are covered separately within our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

This policy focuses specifically on the accessibility of our services and the reasonable adjustments we may make to support customers to engage with us.

This policy supports our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, and the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, including the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and the Safety and Quality Standard. These requirements reinforce our commitment to treating customers fairly and with respect, understanding individual needs, and ensuring services are accessible to all.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all Yorkshire Housing customers who need a reasonable adjustment to access our services. It also applies to colleagues, contractors and partners acting on our behalf who deliver services to customers or handle customer requests.

The policy covers adjustments to how we communicate, provide information, arrange appointments, manage contact and support customers to use our services. It does not cover major physical adaptations to customers' homes, which are managed through our Adaptations Policy

2. Policy Aims

This policy doesn't seek to explain how YH will approach every situation, but it will:

- Confirm our commitment to improving accessibility for everyone that we work with.
- Set out how we will provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people and customers with additional support needs.
- Define what we consider when dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable adjustment:** A change to the way we provide a service, communicate with a customer or apply a process so a disabled customer is not put at a substantial disadvantage when accessing our services.
- **Disabled person:** A person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Auxiliary aid:** Extra support, equipment or assistance that helps a disabled customer access a service, information or communication

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All colleagues are responsible for identifying requests for reasonable adjustments, responding with empathy, avoiding assumptions, agreeing practical next steps with the customer and making sure agreed adjustments are recorded accurately.

Managers are responsible for supporting colleagues to apply this policy consistently, reviewing complex requests, helping to agree alternative adjustments where needed and making sure teams understand their responsibilities.

Customer-facing teams are responsible for putting agreed adjustments into practice when delivering services, including communication preferences, appointment arrangements and support to access complaints or feedback processes. Relevant information must be available to colleagues, contractors and partners who need it to deliver the service, so customers do not have to repeatedly explain their circumstances.

The policy owner is responsible for maintaining the policy, monitoring learning from feedback and complaints, overseeing review activity and providing assurance that the policy remains legally and regulatorily aligned.

5. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy supports our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled customer may otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage when accessing services.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legislative framework that protects the rights of individuals and makes sure that there are equal opportunities for all. We have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments when:

- There is a provision, criterion or practice which puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage and not a person who is not disabled.
- Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who does not have a disability.
- Where a person would, if not for an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

This policy supports the statutory Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code by ensuring that customers can access the complaints process and other services in ways that meet their individual needs. It also supports the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and Safety and Quality Standard, which require landlords to treat customers fairly and with respect, understand the diverse needs of their customers, provide accessible services, and use customer insight to drive service improvements.

6. The Policy

How We Make Services Accessible

Accessibility requirements will vary from person to person. We will work with customers to understand their needs and agree appropriate arrangements wherever possible.

Examples may include:

- Providing information in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille or audio.
- Using interpretation, translation or communication support services.
- Offering different methods of contact.
- Using hearing support equipment.
- Arranging meetings in accessible locations or remotely.
- Allowing a representative or advocate to act on a customer's behalf.
- Agreeing specific contact arrangements to meet individual needs.

This list is not exhaustive.

Our Approach

When considering accessibility requests, we will:

- Listen to and understand the customer's individual circumstances.
- Work collaboratively with the customer to identify suitable solutions.
- Avoid making assumptions about a customer's needs.
- Consider the effectiveness and practicality of any proposed arrangement.
- Implement agreed adjustments as quickly as reasonably possible.
- Keep customers informed if additional time is required.
- Review arrangements periodically to ensure they remain appropriate.

Customer can let us know about an accessibility request ore reasonable adjustment by;

- Email: customerservices@yorkshirehousing.co.uk.
- Phone: 0345 366 4404.
- Website: https://www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk/.
- Customer portal.
- Letter: Yorkshire Housing, 2 Central Place, The Place, Leeds LS10 1FB.
- Face to face with any YH colleague.

Where reasonable, a customer can nominate a representative to deal with a request on their behalf. We might need to ask for authority to discuss the request with the representative. A representative could be a family member, friend, social worker or support worker

Accessible Complaints

We will ensure our complaints process is accessible to all customers and will make reasonable adjustments where required.

This may include:

- Accepting complaints through a range of channels.
- Using a customer's preferred communication method.
- Providing complaint information in accessible formats.
- Offering support to help customers engage with the complaints process.
- Making reasonable adjustments to timescales where appropriate and lawful.

We will never require a customer to submit a complaint in writing if doing so would create a barrier to access**.**

Dissatisfaction with Accessibility Arrangements

If a customer is unhappy with how we have considered or implemented an accessibility arrangement, they can raise this through our complaints process. Details can be found in the Customer Feedback Policy

7. Diversity and Inclusion Implications

Accessibility is fundamental to delivering fair and inclusive services. Through this policy, Yorkshire Housing aims to reduce barriers to access, promote equality of opportunity and ensure customers can engage with our services in a way that meets their individual needs and circumstances.

8. Reporting and Monitoring

We will record relevant accessibility requirements and agreed adjustments on our customer relationship management (CRM) system. This information will help us understand the accessibility needs of our customers, monitor the effectiveness of adjustments and identify opportunities to improve our services.

We will use customer insight, feedback, complaints, service data and customer profiling information to better understand barriers to access and inform service improvements. This includes learning from customer engagement activities, surveys and customer census data to ensure our services remain accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our customers.

Colleagues are responsible for recording agreed accessibility requirements and ensuring information is reviewed and updated when circumstances change.

Date approved	November 2026
Approved by	Customer Experience Committee
Recommended / scrutinised by	Your Voice Matters group Housing Diversity Network Yorkshire Housing colleagues
Summary of changes	The policy has been comprehensively refreshed to provide a clearer, more accessible and customer-focused framework. It now clarifies the scope of the policy and its relationship with the Additional Needs and Aids and Adaptations policies; strengthens alignment with the Equality Act 2010, the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards; and introduces clearer definitions, roles and responsibilities. The revised policy also sets out how customers can request support, provides broader examples of accessibility arrangements, strengthens access to the complaints process, and improves requirements for recording, reviewing, monitoring and learning from agreed adjustments and customer insight. Duplicated and outdated content has been removed, with the language and structure updated to reflect Yorkshire Housing's Policy template requirements and tone of voice.

Frequency of review	Every 3 years
Next review date	November 2029
Policy owner	Head of Communities
Policy author	Head of Communities
Associated policies or guidelines	Customer Feedback Policy **Aids and Adaptions Policy** **Additional Needs Policy**
Associated procedure	Reasonable Adjustment Request Procedure

Version	Date	Change Type	Summary of Change By	Approved By
1.0	April 2021	New policy	Reasonable Adjustments Policy introduced as a new policy.	Homes and Places Committee
2.0	October 2023	Substantive	Policy reviewed and renamed from Reasonable Adjustments Policy to Accessible Services Policy, with updates to improve clarity and accessibility.	Homes and Places Committee
3.0	November 2026	Substantive	Policy comprehensively refreshed, including updated scope, legal and regulatory requirements, roles and responsibilities, accessibility arrangements, complaints access, and recording and monitoring requirements.	Customer Experience Committee